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COLLECTION

CONSULTATIONS HELD BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION WITH THE BUREAUX OR THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE PRINCIPAL SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND THE WORKING PARTIES REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE COMMISSION

(decision B (47), paragraph 4)

Report by the Chairman of the Commission

Introductory remarks

1. Commission decision B (47) invited the Chairman of the Commission together with the Executive Secretary to arrange consultations with the Bureaux or the Chairpersons of the Principal Subsidiary Bodies and the Working Parties reporting directly to the Commission, in order to identify difficulties in the implementation of their work programmes and to facilitate the further streamlining of their activities, so as to ensure the most efficient use of existing resources; and also invited the Chairman of the Commission to report at Ad Hoc informal meetings the results of the consultations and to suggest whenever appropriate practical proposals for consideration by member countries, by the secretariat and by Principal Subsidiary Bodies and the Working Parties reporting directly to the Commission.

2. The report on the consultations held last year proved to be a useful basis for discussion during the horizontal segment of the annual session of the Commission. The Chairman decided therefore to follow that practice.

3. Since the last annual session fourteen consultations have been held, either by the Chairman or by one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Commission. However it is the Chairman who bears the responsibility for the present report.

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4. The first broad set of questions which emerged from the consultations concerns ECE assistance to the newly independent countries in transition (CITs). The most important among them are: how to finance a wider participation of those countries in the meetings and activities of the various subsidiary organs of the ECE; how better to inform them about ECE activities; how to contribute most effectively and efficiently to the transformation of their economies.

5. Questions were also raised concerning the allocation of financial resources to the most important ECE activities and the possibilities of increasing them through extra budgetary contributions. Also new forms and modalities of cooperation with the private sector were considered in this context (see the consultations on Steel and on the Chemical Industry). The problem was also raised of more flexible ways of spending the ECE trust funds in order to benefit more the countries in transition.

6. Another recurring problem is the adaptation of ECE priorities set out in a totally different situation to the present needs of its expanded membership (see the consultations on Agriculture; Engineering Industries and Automation; Science and Technology; and Steel).

7. There is also a broad and complex question of coordination of the activities of the ECE and its subsidiary bodies with other organizations present in the region in particular as far as the calendar of meetings is concerned (see the consultations on Standardization and Senior Economic Advisers).

8. These are some of the issues related to the place and role of the ECE in the new emerging architecture of post cold war Europe. The Commission might wish to address some of them during the programme and coordination segment. The presence of members of the bureaux of its PSBs will certainly be of great help during the debate. It can be hoped that this exchange of views will contribute to finding adequate responses to the expectations of the expanded ECE membership.

Summary of the consultations

9. Views expressed in the summaries which follow are those of the participants at respective meetings and reflect their common opinion unless attributed to specific speakers.

Working Party on Standardization Policies

(Consultation held by Ambassador L. Dembinski on 10 May 1994)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. S. Averin (Russian Federation); Vice-Chairman, Mr. C. Arvius (Sweden); Rapporteur, Mr. M. Lukaszewicz (Poland)

10. It was stated that the Working Party was a unique forum where leading figures in the area of standardization and related activities such as conformity assessment and metrology could exchange views and information and reach agreement on matters of mutual interest. Although some of the trade policy aspects were also touched upon in other fora, such as technical barriers to trade in GATT, EFTA and the European Commission, no other forum rivalled or was likely to rival in the near future the role of the Working Party as a supra-regional forum.

11. The Chairman of the Working Party, Mr. Averin, said that the main political question facing the Working Party was the attitude of the European Commission towards international standardization. By favouring the activities of the main west European standardization institutions, CEN, CENELEC and ETSI, over wider international cooperation, the European Commission was in fact discriminating against third countries. The insistence that the Russian Federation should accept certificates of conformity issued by European Commission bodies without reciprocity was cited as an example of such discriminatory practices.

12. Mr. Arvius stated that, although the European Commission might have a certain tendency to favour standardization bodies in its member countries, he was of the opinion that the absence of European Commission representatives from the Working Party's three recent annual meetings resulted from internal difficulties and the burden of work rather than from a lack of interest in the activities of the Working Party. He was prepared to inform the Commission's DG III of the concern of the Working Party.

13. The need was stressed to coordinate better the activities of the PSBs concerning the recommendations on or observation of some standards relating to transport, environment or perishable produce. The example was cited of recommendations on standards worked out by the Working Party that had been entirely ignored by the Inland Transport Committee while elaborating agreements on the transport of dangerous goods. Since the activities of the Working Party were closely connected with the question of access to markets, which would be one of the main themes of the forthcoming Commission session, the Director of the Industry and Technology Division was invited to contact the Trade Division to establish cooperation between the two Divisions in the preparation of a background paper. It was also said in this context that the application of certain standards could permit the avoidance of some trade barriers.

14. Particular attention was paid to the problem of financing training courses on standardization and related activities which were of great interest to the CITs. One idea raised was to establish a team of specialists who could visit interested countries and give such courses.

Committee on Agriculture

(Consultation held by Mr. U. Rosengarten on 19 May 1994)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. K. Hirsch (Germany); Vice-Chairmen, Mr. N.V. Averyanov, (Russian Federation), Mr. A. Gasowski, (Poland)

15. Assistance to countries in transition was the main goal of the reorientation of the Committee's programme of work. Referring to this task, the role of the Committee in contributing to policy orientation in the following programme elements was stressed: review of market situation, current trends and prospects, institutional aspects of market management including problems of privatization, land reform and marketing.

16. Problems of facilitating market access for agricultural produce coming from the countries in transition were raised. The ECE could analyse the evolution of the flows of the agricultural products and their quality on the one hand and the demand on the other. The Commission should not however duplicate discussions held on this item in other international fora.

17. It was stated that the Committee was at the same time a political body (dealing with political issues, e.g. assistance to CITs) and a group of experts. In this context the view was expressed that the rank of national delegates should be higher. The other members of the Bureau stressed rather the importance of better attendance at the Committee sessions. The Bureau was concerned about the limited participation of countries in transition in the Committee's sessions. Different proposals were considered in order to improve the situation: sending a letter from the secretariat to high level officials in the Ministries of Agriculture, finding funds for financing the participation of CITs, especially for those which are not FAO members.

18. The Bureau was of the opinion that the identification of agriculture as a non-priority area for the ECE should be re-examined. Agriculture was closely linked to other important areas like environment, transport, energy and trade and therefore should be seen in a wider context.

19. There was a consensus that the resolution on "Cooperation of the ECE and FAO in the field of agriculture in Europe" adopted by the Committee at its forty-fifth session aimed at maintaining the support of the FAO to the ECE secretariat for the sake of the work being done. A number of CITs are not FAO members and the ECE constitutes for them the only international forum dealing with agriculture. A common opinion was expressed that the existing capacities in Geneva to service the Committee on Agriculture should be maintained.

20. Importance of the cooperation with Codex in standards setting activities was underlined. At the same time the valuable work on standards done by the ECE was pointed out. With regard to agricultural produce it was stated that the ECE could considerably help the CITs to offer high quality goods (in conformity with ECE standards) on international markets.

Committee on Environmental Policy

(Consultation held by Ambassador L. Dembinski on 31 May 1994)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. K. Barlund (Finland); Vice-Chairpersons, Mr. D. Mount (United States), Mr. W. Kakebeeke (Netherlands), Mr. V. Kostin (Russia), Mr. B. Natov (Bulgaria), Ms. B. Quincy (France) and Mr. I. Tokes (Hungary)

21. It was stated that new terms of reference of the Committee on Environmental Policy would better respond to the challenging tasks facing the region. The following strategic issues of the session were highlighted: finalization of Guidelines on Integrated Environmental Management in CITs, extension of the system of country environmental performance reviews to the entire ECE region by launching a pilot ECE review of Estonia and cooperating with OECD in its pilot reviews of Poland, Bulgaria and Belarus, preparations for the Sofia Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in October 1995, implementation of the three recent environmental conventions pending their entry into force (on Environmental Impact Assessment, on Transboundary Waters and on Industrial Accidents) and promotion of the ECE Plan of Action to Implement Agenda 21.

22. A common view was expressed that many activities could not be financed through the current regular budget and therefore more resources were needed. A question was raised whether there was in all capitals sufficient support and political interest for the ECE in general vis-à-vis other organizations. The need was emphasized to draw the attention of member Governments to the ECE as

a whole. Opportunities were underscored of raising the political role of the ECE by organizing on a regular basis similar to OECD ministerial meetings for discussions of major cross-sectoral issues. A proposal was also mentioned to push the ministers more and make them attend from time to time the regular ECE environmental meetings.

23. The importance of the Committee's activities for both eastern and western countries was stressed. The transboundary character of environmental problems, e.g. air and water pollution, should act as an integrating factor. Convergence of environmental conditions and policies was contributing to stability in the region. In this context concern was expressed about the ratification process and implementation of the ECE environmental conventions.

24. With regard to assistance to CITs, the role of the Committee was acknowledged in strengthening environmental management capabilities in countries in transition and promoting integration of environmental policies with other policies at national level. It was also said that the provision of financial assistance to CITs would facilitate participation of their experts in ECE meetings.

25. It was stated that greater involvement of all PSBs in the field of environment and sustainable development was needed. The Committee should elaborate at its special session in autumn 1994 relevant recommendations to the Commission pursuant to decision F (49).

26. Financial problems of the forthcoming Sofia Ministerial Conference were raised. In this regard it was also stated that ongoing cooperation with the European Community on the implementation of the ECE conventions, with OECD on environment and economics and on environmental reviews as well as on hazardous wastes and with UNEP on improvement of environmental management in CITs, would be strengthened during the preparatory process for this Conference.

27. The need was mentioned of active involvement of the Committee in the preparations for the 1996 Regional Conference on Transport and Environment.

28. The Bureau emphasized that additional long-term resources were needed for the new activities on environmental performance review and "Environment for Europe" process.

Senior Economic Advisers

(Consultation held by Ambassador C. Manhusen on 8 June 1994)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. J.-P. Pagé (France); Vice-Chairmen, Mr. I. Kosir (Slovakia), Mr. K. Puumanen (Finland)

29. The Chairman recalled briefly the main activities undertaken by the Senior Economic Advisers (SEA). The discussion of medium- and longer-term projections and related analysis were referred to as activities which were highly appreciated by national delegations and were of particular interest to policy makers in the region. Efforts made by the secretariat to present a synthesis of global projections prepared by national and international organizations should be continued (and their results widely disseminated). With respect to CITs it would be desirable to prepare projections not only for groups of countries but for individual countries as well. This applies

particularly to the newly independent States of the former USSR which at present are treated only in an aggregated way by UN Project LINK.

30. International economic relations in the ECE region in the light of the outcome of the Uruguay Round and the restructuring of State-owned enterprises were the two topics which had been selected by the Senior Advisers as focus for their discussions. As a follow-up to the decisions adopted by the Senior Advisers at their last session these topics were introduced by discussion leaders. A summary of the main conclusions and findings emerging from the debates was prepared by the Bureau under its responsibility and issued as a separate document. Given the interest attached to the exchange of views and information during the SEA's annual session it is hoped that in the future more publicity will be given to their activities in order to attract a wider audience.

31. It was also stressed that the main findings of the Economic Survey of Europe should be more widely disseminated among economic experts and policy makers in the region. Mr. Pagé, supported by Mr. Berthelot, suggested in this connection that each year a presentation of the Survey be made by the secretariat to selected ECE member countries. France was ready to host such meetings.

32. It was agreed that the SEA provided a unique forum for countries in transition to exchange views and opinions with their western partners and achieve a better mutual understanding of their respective positions. There was a common understanding that more emphasis should be put on assistance to CITs. If we want to help them we should do it now; in a few years the transition will be over and the assistance will not be necessary. The SEA could also play a major role in the provision of technical assistance to countries in transition, e.g., to facilitate the accession of some CITs to the World Trade Organization.

33. Bearing in mind a better attendance at the SEA meetings and a higher level of participating delegations, a common view was expressed that the SEA sessions should be shorter and last less than one week as at present. The future dates of sessions should be coordinated with other international organizations, e.g. OECD, in order to avoid unfortunate conflicts of dates.

34. It was also pointed out that the agenda should concentrate on selected substantive issues. Proposals were made to delete as an agenda item the review of "matters arising from the preceding Commission session" and "activities of other PSBs", and rather to focus the attention on transition issues and rationalize the adoption of reports which normally takes too much time. It was said that an informal meeting of Senior Advisers scheduled for January 1995 should serve this purpose.

Senior Advisers on Science and Technology

(Consultation held by Ambassador L. Dembinski on 23 September 1994)
Bureau: Mr. M. Kepka (Poland); Mr. P. Baruch (France) (absent from the meeting)

35. The Chairman of the Senior Advisers on Science and Technology (SAST) stressed the generally constructive atmosphere which had prevailed at the session, that differed to some extent from the previous one. Delegates had

shown their interest in improving the efficiency of this body which was playing an important role in assisting a number of countries in transition. It was also pointed out that the SAST remained a unique forum for the exchange of views and information in particular for CITs. Although there was some overlapping with the activities of the OECD it was in the interest of the CITs since it was the only body in the region where all European countries are equal partners.

36. It was stated that the session itself was largely oriented towards the problems of assistance to countries in transition. A new programme activity entitled "Role of science and technology in securing sustainable development of the economies in transition" had been included in the work programme of SAST. The Senior Advisers had also decided to participate actively in the second Workshop on Industrial Policies in the Economies in Transition to be held in Budapest in autumn 1995 and to organize a seminar on the reorganization of the system of management of science and technology under new economic and political conditions, in the Russian Federation in 1996.

37. The usefulness of the inventory of existing safety guidelines in biotechnology was emphasized. It was recommended that the work be continued and a compilation be made available of the most recent summaries of national submissions in the form of a publication.

38. Since in many countries in transition the development of science and technology was considered to be of utmost importance, the necessity of reshaping the ECE priorities was raised. The question of holding the sessions of the Senior Advisers annually within existing resources was also discussed. It was accepted that there was a possibility of organizing the sessions annually if the Senior Advisers and the Commission so desired.

39. Attention was drawn to the problem of financing SAST activities, e.g. the seminar on State policy in countries in transition aimed at promoting innovation in industry, which had not yet been held as planned in Poland owing to financial difficulties. It was also pointed out that the secretariat´s resources to implement the SAST work programme were minimal which was an obstacle to organizing more seminars and/or workshops.

40. It was agreed that the forum discussion held at the 1994 session on the main issues of national science and technology policy in the economies in transition and the role of international organizations in maintaining and developing their R & D potential, was a useful exercise and a further discussion on another subject would be organized at the next session.

41. An exchange of views took place on the idea of organizing a Science Summit (tentatively in 2000) with the aim of determining ways of matching the efforts and the potential of all countries in the region to solving important global problems.

Working Party on the Chemical Industry

(Consultation held by Ambassador L. Dembinski on 7 October 1994)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. J. Coupek (Czech Republic); Vice-Chairman, Mr. R.W.P. Steur (Netherlands)

42. The importance of the chemical industry and its products to all sectors of the economy was underlined. At the same time the need to improve the public image of this sector was stressed, causing increasing concern of the chemical industry in particular in the context of environmental protection and sustainable development.

43. The Bureau was of the opinion that the efficiency of the Working Party on the Chemical Industry was increasing. Delegations were demanding more action but financial resources were lacking. The decreasing role of the State vis-à-vis the private sector in the chemical industry was discussed. Of the 22 delegations attending the meeting more than half were from private industry and associations. To establish good cooperation with the private sector was considered of utmost importance for the future work of the Working Party.

44. The lack of travel funds was mentioned as a reason for the low participation of delegations from some countries in transition.

45. The Working Party on the Chemical Industry was considered to be a unique forum, where representatives of Governments, industry and international organizations could effectively exchange views and opinions on crucial problems facing the chemical industry in the region. It was stressed that these activities should be strengthened in order to maintain the interest and support of the Governments and the private sector.

46. It was pointed out that the programme of work of the Working Party was intensive and its implementation efficient. The programme was focused on issues resulting from the guiding principles of the ECE or the priority subprogrammes, e.g. the promotion of sustainable development and assistance to CITs. The opinion was expressed that assistance should gradually be replaced by partnership between the developed western countries and the countries in transition. Projects relating to such objectives fell within the regional programme entitled Chemical Industry - Sustainable Economic and Ecological Development (CHEMISEED).

47. Strong support was expressed for the CHEMISEED programme and its further implementation in close cooperation with other international organizations. The need for substantive and financial assistance to the Regional Environmental Centre for the Chemical Industry in Warsaw was highlighted. The pilot project demonstrating the environmental clean-up of selected sites polluted by chemicals and the comparative study of chemical legislation were noted. The importance of the work on the harmonization of chemical legislation within the region, based on the studies of the Working Party was emphasized. The comparative study was considered as an excellent example of cooperation with the European Commission.

48. The work of the Working Party in the field of statistics should be further developed and given high priority, in particular the publication "The Chemical Industry - Annual Review". In this context the secretariat proposal to include analysis of trade in chemicals in its annual bulletin was welcomed by the meeting. It was also recommended that resources be made available to finalize The Directory of Chemical Producers and Products as decided by the Working Party. The Directory was said to be one of the most successful publications of the Division.

Timber Committee

(Consultation held by Ambassador C. Manhusen on 13 October 1994)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. M. Lipman (absent from the meeting); Vice-Chairmen, Mr. G. Siegel (Austria), Mr. D. Darr (United States)

49. The discussion of forest products markets held at the session of the Committee was commented on. The desirability of cooperating with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) was stressed, especially as the Timber Committee had always reviewed tropical timber markets in its region, alongside markets for other forest products. The meeting noted that the ECE secretariat had taken the initiative in contacting the ITTO secretariat with a view to developing modalities for cooperation, in order to avoid duplication of work.

50. It was stated that the Committee was making an important contribution to sustainable forest management (which remained the highest priority for the Committee) and the follow-up to the UNCED and the Helsinki Conference. A toolkit prepared by a team of specialists for use in information and awareness efforts in order to reach a proper balance in the public opinion between the economic and the environmental and social imperatives of sustainability of the sector was very welcome.

51. The establishment of a team of specialists on certification of forest products (decided by the Committee) in order to investigate consequences of possible schemes for certifying that wood products originate from sustainable managed forests was also commented on. Close cooperation in this field with GATT was recommended.

52. It was stated that the programme of cooperation with countries in transition was proceeding satisfactorily. Problems of participation of some CITs were mentioned. The initiative taken by the Committee team to collect information on relevant bilateral and multilateral activities aimed at assisting CITs was welcome. The importance of workshops was recognized. More assistance was expected from the programme of activities of ECE regional advisers.

53. The meeting noted that the mechanism for coordination between the Committee and one of its subsidiary bodies, the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology Management and Training, needed improvement.

54. It was noted that the restructuring of the FAO/ECE relationship appeared to be moving towards a satisfactory solution, although the solution proposed could be administratively fragile. The problem should be monitored.

Working Party on Steel

(Consultation held by Mr.U.Rosengarten on 28 October 1994)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. H.U. Meiswinkel (Germany); Vice-Chairman, Mr. L. Shevelev (Russian Federation)

55. It was stated that the Working Party on Steel was working efficiently in the ECE priority areas and had successfully involved in its work both the steel industry and government representatives. This involvement had

contributed to the success of the Working Party in implementing its programme of assistance to CITs.

56. It was recalled that a regional programme, "Metallurgy and Ecology", had been developed in the field of the sustainable development of the steel industry and environmental protection. Seminars and workshops were organized within this programme and a bibliography of publications on the environment and the steel industry was being elaborated. Members of the secretariat had been invited to act as technical advisers on financial and managerial aspects of the restructuring of the steel industry in CITs.

57. It was noted that the regular staff of the steel section had decreased over the last three years. However, thanks to some member countries which had provided highly qualified economists, personal computers and financial support, activities had been reorganized and reoriented towards more practical and efficient assistance to CITs.

58. Parallel to this the Working Party had launched a project aimed at integrating the steel industry of the CITs into the steel industry of Europe as a region. This project was supported jointly by the World Bank, the EBRD, the European Commission, the International Iron and Steel Institute and the ECE. The project had provided for the first time a detailed picture of the steel industry in western, central and eastern Europe and was a practical tool for potential investors in the decision-making process.

59. The Vice-Chairman of the Commission expressed his particular satisfaction with this project which was meeting many of the requirements of the CITs. He also expressed the wish that such a model be applied in other sectors and that a recommendation to that effect be formulated for discussion by the Commission. He was of the opinion that resources should be invested to explore the possibilities of cooperation with the newly established Euro-Asian Agreement for Coal and Steel which was made up of the CIS countries.

60. The Vice-Chairman commended the amount of work done by the Working Party and suggested that it be allowed more days for meetings. He suggested that given the extensive statistical activities within the Industry and Technology Division, resources be found for an additional statistician to join the Division and that this question be handled at the Commission level. He recommended that special interest should in the future be attached to this sector of industry which if not a "priority" sector was certainly a "necessity" sector.

Working Party on Engineering Industries and Automation

(Consultation held by Mr. U. Rosengarten on 1 November 1994)
Bureau: Chairperson, Ms. J. Ory (France); Mr. R. Bandorowicz (Poland) on behalf of Vice-Chairman of the Working Party, Mr. V. Petrichenko (Russian Federation) (absent from the meeting).

61. The main activities of the Working Party were reviewed. It was stated that the programme of work had been further streamlined in order to address some of the priority areas of the ECE: economic analysis and statistics, environmental protection and assistance to engineering industries in countries in transition. It was also noted that the assistance priorities of the CITs did not necessarily coincide with the five ECE priorities.

62. The problem was raised of participation of delegates from countries in transition, especially those from the newly independent States of the former USSR. Even their passive participation could result in benefits for them. It was noted that the participation of experts in individual projects (statistics, medical engineering, industrial automation etc.) as well as in seminars and workshops organized in countries in transition (e.g. in Minsk) was much better than the participation in the annual sessions of the Working Party. The lack of financial resources to pay the travel costs and the stay in Geneva was indicated as a main reason. It was therefore thought a good idea at present to organize workshops in countries of central Europe and western parts of the CIS. Nevertheless, it was proposed to raise this question at the fiftieth Commission session.

63. It was pointed out that activities undertaken in selected areas, e.g., industrial robotics, technical aid for the elderly and disabled, and new engineering materials, continued to attract both west European and American experts as well as those from Japan and countries in transition. In addressing social issues, e.g. rehabilitation engineering, the Working Party was responding to socio-economic challenges and contributing to the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development.

64. The excellent cooperation with OECD on engineering statistics was stressed. The need for an improvement and enhancement of the relationship with the European Commission and the Council of Europe was recommended.

65. The Bureau expressed its satisfaction with its working contacts with the secretariat. Two professional staff members (50% of resources compared to 1984) had managed to finalize four sales publications and service one seminar and one workshop in 1994.

Committee on Energy

(Consultation held by Ambassador C. Manhusen on 10 November 1994)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. I. Szergenyi (Hungary); Vice-Chairman, Mr. Alptürk (Turkey); Chairman of the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project, Mr. D. Volfberg (Russian Federation) (on behalf of Vice-chairman of the Committee on Energy, Mr. A. Gritsenko, absent from the meeting).

66. The main activities of the Committee were reviewed. It was noted that the programme of work had been further streamlined to address priority issues of the Commission and that collaboration with other PSBs as well as with other UN and non-UN initiatives in the energy field should be strengthened. In particular every effort should be made to support the European Energy Charter and its Energy Efficiency Protocol.

67. It was stated that more emphasis should be put on energy problems in the ECE region, particularly on energy policies and strategies. Participants in the meeting noted that there was no common region-wide energy policy which would secure programming of supply and demand. The various policies in different countries of the region could be studied more closely so that energy scenarios might be set out. It was stressed however that Governments were free to decide upon their energy policy, patterns of consumption or prices. The ECE could serve as a forum for an exchange of views. It was also said that more discussion should be dedicated to energy-related issues, particularly energy policy under transition circumstances, and less to

economic world-wide review. It was recalled that such a proposal should be inserted into the report of the Committee on Energy session. It was also stated that the Committee should pursue its activities in energy in an integrated manner including economic analysis, such as growth of GNP and improvement of living standards, as well as environmental aspects.

68. Increased cooperation with countries in transition was noted. The Round Table on Energy Pricing in CITs was considered a positive innovation in the work of the Committee which highlighted new ideas of setting up realistic energy prices. Questions relating to energy prices, consumption and social aspects should be further discussed. It was agreed that given the importance of energy pricing for countries in transition, more assistance in this area was needed (e.g., another round table discussion, workshops, symposia etc.).

69. The Demonstration Zones programme under the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project was recognized as another area of successful assistance to CITs which should be further developed and enlarged.

70. With regard to the establishment of the "Gas Centre" a common view was expressed that it might play a very useful role for the CITs.

71. In view of the important part energy activities have in providing assistance to economies in transition, including the IMPACCT programme (clean coal technologies), caution was expressed during the Committee on Energy session by the United Kingdom and Germany that too many extrabudgetary activities could diminish the importance of regular programmes. In this context it was recalled that trust funds could not be used for financing regular ECE activities. All participants in the meeting agreed that this problem should be looked at more closely in the future as the programmes develop.

72. The major difficulty in the work of the Committee was the problem of participation of delegates coming from countries in transition. It was stated that insufficient participation was due to financial difficulties in these countries notwithstanding their keen interest in energy. The ECE secretariat was asked to review this issue so as to facilitate, to the extent possible, their participation.

73. In order to enhance the role of the Committee it was proposed to shift the emphasis of its work towards energy policy questions and to secure the participation in Committee sessions of people dealing directly with energy problems. It was also said that the increased participation of the European Union and other international organizations would contribute to cooperative arrangements among all parties concerned.

Committee on the Development of Trade

(Consultation held by Ambassador L. Dembinski on 7 December 1994)
Bureau of the Committee on the Development of Trade: Chairman, Mr. Jeffrey de Laurentis (United States); Vice-Chairman, Mr. Berinde (Romania);
Bureau of the Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4): Chairman of the WP.4, Mr. T. Blomfeldt (Finland); Chairman of WP.4/GE.1, Mr. R. Walker (United Kingdom)

74. The Chairman of the Committee commented briefly on the proceedings during the first day of the session. He expressed pleasure at the high quality of the documentation and concern at the lateness of its submission.

75. The Bureaux discussed the problem of re-engineering and a proposal to upgrade the status of WP.4. The following reasons for changing the status of WP.4 and re-organizing its activities were mentioned:

- to give it the enhanced status it required; people outside the UN cannot understand why such an activity was only accorded the status of a Working Party given its global and intersectoral character;

- to separate technical discussions and decision taking from policy discussion;

- to achieve a leaner and more efficient organization by eliminating one layer (the present meetings of experts GE.1 and GE.2) in the organizational structure.

76. The proposed Committee would then have two Working Parties: one for EDIFACT and the other for trade procedures. The new body would only deal with policy issues.

77. It was noted that, whatever the outcome of the re-engineering process, more resources would be needed. The Executive Secretary informed the meeting that he had already requested an increase in staff and travel budget for EDIFACT and trade facilitation. He also stated that the upgrading of WP.4 would not undermine the trade-policy and promotion side of the Committee´s activities. He reminded the meeting that he would not create a new Division and trade facilitation would remain under the Trade Division.

78. It was agreed that Mr. de Laurentis would propose to the Committee on the Development of Trade that the report of the WP.4 would go to an ad hoc meeting of the Committee prior to the next session of the Commission. The Committee would then be able to discuss the report from the Ad hoc Group and to forward a recommendation to the Commission.

Committee on Human Settlements

(Consultation held by Mr. U. Rosengarten on 16 December 1994)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. P. Gurtner (Switzerland); Vice-Chairpersons, Mr. R. Lajoie (Canada), Ms. H. Zaniewska (Poland); Chairman WP.5, Mr. U. Christiansen (Denmark) - Chairman WP.6, Mr. S. Brenke (Germany)

79. It was recalled that the ECE Committee on Human Settlements was the only intergovernmental body dealing with human settlements issues on a region-wide scale. Its main objective was assistance to CITs and sustainable human settlements development. The following specific programme elements of special interest to these countries were mentioned:

(a) Country profiles on the housing sector - which was oriented towards analytical assessment of the housing sector and related policies in order to assist Governments in formulating sound housing policies and promote investments in the sector;

(b) Cadaster - which was a prerequisite of any privatization; ownership rights; and modern land management;

(c) Housing modernization - which included such important problems facing housing sectors in CITs as quality of life, energy saving, etc;

(d) Sustainable human settlements development, which should basically be dealt with within the context of economic and social sustainability; and environmental aspects.

80. It was pointed out that the housing sector and construction were the basic economic sectors and essential factors of economic recovery in every country, along with social and political stability in countries in transition.

81. Preparations for the Habitat II Conference were stressed as another important area of Committee activities. Implementation of the four above-mentioned programme elements should constitute a concrete contribution of the ECE to Habitat II.

82. It was said that the cooperation with other ECE sectors, e.g. energy efficiency-2000, environment and transport (on issues relating to urban transport) should be improved.

83. Concern was expressed at the retirement of two staff members and the resulting post vacancies. Serious concern was also expressed about the possible impact on Committee activities resulting from announced ECE budgetary savings.

Inland Transport Committee

(Consultation held by Ambassador L. Dembinski on 20 January 1995)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. J. Silva Rodrigues (Portugal); Vice-Chairman, Mr. A. Suvorov (Russian Federation)

84. The Bureau informed the Chairman of the Commission of the cooperation with other international bodies dealing with transport. In this connection it highlighted, in particular, that the activities of the ECE Inland Transport Committee had been referred to during the second Pan-European Transport Conference held in Crete and duly reflected in the final declaration.

85. As to the preparatory activities under way for the 1996 Regional Conference on Transport and Environment, the Chairman was informed that more than thirty Governments had replied to a questionnaire to identify topics and measures for the Conference. On the basis of the replies received the PrepCom was currently considering draft guidelines for a common ECE strategy regarding transport and environment. There was so far no consensus on the possible outcome of the Conference.

86. Furthermore, the importance of assistance to CITs was stressed. The Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) will convene an ad hoc meeting from 26 to 28 June 1995 in order to make an inventory of the aid provided up to now to countries in transition by western Governments and international financial institutions and to identify further needs of CITs. It was also recommended that a round table be organized during the next

session of the Committee with a view to analysing in more detail questions of assistance to CITs.

87. The question of transport infrastructures was also addressed. In this context it was stated that international transport networks as defined in the AGR, AGC and AGTC agreements were regularly updated and would be extended to the newly independent states. In the same vein the importance of the TEM and TER projects for central and east European countries as well as for the newly independent States was stressed.

88. The Bureau also brought up the question of the establishment of environmental standards in international road transport, which was under consideration in view of a possible revision of the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic.

89. The Chairman also noted the amendment to the 1958 Agreement, which will streamline the procedures and allow the enlargement of the agreement to countries having a different system of vehicles approval, including non-ECE countries. He also welcomed the increasing number of Regulations annexed to the Agreement dealing with environmental aspects of vehicles.

90. With regard to road traffic safety it was proposed to establish a link between the Second Road Safety Week to be held in the members countries from 27 March to 2 April 1995 and the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

91. Concern was expressed about the suspension of TIR tobacco/alcohol carnets because of increasing fraud, which could endanger the whole TIR transit system. The short-term measures adopted as well as the decision of the Committee to revise urgently the TIR convention were welcomed.

92. The interest of east and central European countries in upgrading the European Provisions concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways to the status of an agreement was noted. An important step was made in that an international working group was set up in order to deal with this question with a view to the future drafting, jointly with the other organizations concerned, of a possible ADN.

93. Finally, the need to consider transport matters in connection with the pertinent work of other ECE subsidiary bodies, particularly in the fields of energy, trade (EDIFACT) and environment, was also noted.

Conference of European Statisticians

(Consultation held by Ambassador L. Dembinski on 6 February 1995)
Bureau: Chairman, Mr. I. Fellegi (Canada); Vice-Chairmen, Mr. P. Garonna (Italy), Mr. J. Olenski (Poland), Mr. G. Vukovich (Hungary) (absent from the meeting). Permanent observers: Mr. Y. Franchet (EU), Mr. L. Kincannon (OECD).

94. The Chairman of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) described the excellent and very effective trilateral cooperation that characterizes the relationship at both the secretariat and government level between the CES, EUROSTAT and OECD. The following separate but mutually reinforcing mechanisms of this cooperation were mentioned in this context:

(a) the integrated presentation of international statistical work in the ECE region, which is the major tool that the Conference and its Bureau now use to coordinate international statistical work undertaken in the ECE region. This presents carefully structured summary information on the statistically-related work that ECE, EUROSTAT, OECD and other leading international organizations active in the region (e.g. ILO, WHO, IMF, etc.) plan to do in the next few years.

(b) annual Joint Programme Review (JPR) meetings which are held by the heads of the statistical services of the three organizations and their senior staff to deal with problems and issues which secretariat staff at the working level have not been able to resolve. Recent meetings have had to deal with fewer outstanding problems and much more with developing cooperative plans for the future.

(c) regular intersecretariat working group meetings which are organized in individual fields of statistics, and which generally take place on the margins of intergovernmental meetings, many of which are now being sponsored jointly by two or more organizations.

95. These mechanisms have proved to be extremely useful for eliminating duplication or overlap in the work programmes of the various organizations, for ensuring that the organizations are not working at cross purposes, and for developing joint programmes for the future.

96. The Bureau emphasized that the same trilateral mechanisms have enabled the most efficient use of resources at both the national and international level. Financial support from the European Union through Eurostat to CITs (e.g. training courses and costs of attendance at ECE meetings) was noted with great satisfaction. In this connection it was also stated that the participation of countries in transition including the newly independent states in the ECE statistics-related meetings was good. A very important role of EUROSTAT, OECD and ECE in assisting the statistical offices in the newly independent States (the former republics of the USSR and those resulting from the former Yugoslavia) to develop their statistical systems was also emphasized.

97. The unquestioned total commitment of the heads of the statistical services of the three organizations to this process of working together essentially as partners has also been a major factor in the success which has been achieved to date. The annual meetings of the CES Bureau and the plenary session of the Conference will be used for promoting further progress.

98. It was stated that links with other PSBs were mainly at the secretariat level. Staff of the Statistical Division serviced or assisted in servicing meetings concerned with statistics in the field of industry, transport, energy, human settlements, environment, agriculture and population.

99. It was noted that the methods of work of the Conference and its Bureau developed for use in the field of statistics were an excellent model which could also be used by other PSBs.